



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>

BESSIE GRAY.

1489

f. 2686

1489 f. 2681











BESSIE GRAY,

OR

THE DULL CHILD.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE FAIRY BOWER."

LONDON:
JAMES BURNS, PORTMAN STREET;
AND HENRY MOZLEY AND SONS, DERRY.
1842.

HENRY MOZLEY AND SONS, PRINTERS, DERBY.





BESSIE GRAY

OR

THE DULL CHILD.

CHAPTER I.

THE ALPHABET.

ELIZABETH GRAY was the only daughter of a labourer in a country village. Her parents were industrious and respectable people, and her father, from his cleverness and handiness, was raised a degree above many of his own class. If any thing was amiss in the village, Robert Gray was sure to be sent for; and it was a hard matter indeed if his skill or his good sense did not mend it a little.

But it is of Elizabeth, or, as she was always called, Bessie, I am going to write, and therefore I shall speak of her father only when his sayings or doings concern her. Perhaps you would think

this strange if you knew them both, for he was a clever man certainly, and many of his sayings were so good, that they were quite worth writing down, while the little Bessie was not what is generally called quick, or clever, or lively. There was nothing at all remarkable about her as far as natural abilities went: I do not know a single child who might not be considered cleverer than little Bessie, and yet I have a great deal to say about her; and though you may think it must all be 'very stupid, if I have nothing but a dull child to write about, I mean you, if you go on, to like poor Bessie, and not to think her at all dull. The truth is, that Bessie, from her very early years, had one quality, which is a greater opposite to dullness than either cleverness or liveliness. What this quality was I shall leave you to discover after you have heard something about this little girl.

Bessie had not the advantage, which many village children have, of going to school so early that they scarcely remember when they learned their letters;—perhaps even they cannot remember the time when they could not read. This is an advantage that village children often have over the children of the squire and all the gentlemen in the neighbourhood; but Bessie had it not. *She did not go to school till she was six year*

old, and, as it happened, neither of her parents could read. Bessie was as ignorant of her letters as the smallest child in the school. She however had often heard her father say what a fine thing learning was, how he grieved over his want of it, and how he wished there was a school near enough for little Bessie to go to. The spring that Bessie was six years old, Esther Mills, the blacksmith's daughter, came home, being disabled from service by a lame hand. There was much talk in the village about what Esther could do and what she could not do. A hundred schemes were proposed for her, but Esther seemed fit for none, and many were pitying her and her parents for the incumbrance she would be to them, when Esther put an end to all the speculations one day, by announcing that she meant to keep a school, and that she was ready to receive as many pupils as should be sent to her on the next Monday. Little Bessie wondered, but did not dare ask her father if he meant to send her to school, now that there was to be one in the village. One minute she thought one way and the next another, till at length her father said to her, "Bessie, my girl, should you like to make one of Esther Mills' new scholars?"

Bessie's little heart bounded high, but she answered so quietly, that after she had left the

room, her mother observed to her father, "I fear me, Robert, Bessie will make but a dull one after all."

"Time will show," replied Robert; adding quaintly, as he held up a bright key, "Why, Jane, is your key dull and mine bright?"

"Because yours is always in your pocket," replied his wife, understanding his meaning, "but a key is not a girl I take it."

"No, but the dullest matter, if hard enough, gets a face with constant rubbing, and so I take it may our Bessie."

"Well, I am glad to hear you say so, Robert," said Jane, "for somehow or other your words generally turn up for truth."

So on Monday Bessie went to school. All looked quite as delightful as she expected. There was Esther Mills—neat and smiling, a nice new form all along one side of the room, some A, B, C books and others on the table, and a rod hung up over the fire-place. All that was done that day seemed very new and wonderful to Bessie; and she thought she liked school quite as much as she expected. But next day, she was sadly surprised and vexed to find that she could not tell great A, B, and little *a, b, one from the other* as she had done at first. *All was a puzzle to her*, and all seemed to run

out of her head as fast as it was put in. In a few days the clergyman came to visit the new school, and he heard the elder ones read and asked them some questions. These he had seen and known at the Sunday school, and they had been well taught till the last half year by good old Mrs. Higham, who had become too infirm to go on teaching. Among these were some quick clever girls, but the sharpest was Ann Roberts. Sharp is just the proper word for her, for Ann was not clever enough to be very sound, and she did not give her mind enough to her books to make herself as much so as she might have been. She was satisfied to stand well in the school, and to be generally praised as the quickest girl. She had a good memory, and used it to repeat by heart, without caring for the sense of the words. She was considered very good-natured, and so she was, if all went as she liked, and if nobody interfered with her; but she liked to take the lead in every thing.

Mr. Baker, the clergyman, did not examine Bessie and the younger ones; he said he would wait till they had been at school a little longer and knew their letters; but he wished their school-mistress to keep account of their goings on, and let him know who was good and attentive and who was not. Thus matters went on for

seven or eight weeks, and poor Bessie found out that school was not the happy place she imagined, for she had many troubles. She did not get on like the others, and so was always being scolded by her school-mistress: besides she was in the lowest place in the school, though she was the oldest in that class; and though she knew it was true, it was a great pain to her to hear it said two or three times a day, before all, that she was a dull child and that there was no use in teaching her. This caused her many tears, and she used to sit crying over her alphabet when it would have been much better if she had given her whole attention to her task. Besides this, her behaviour drew upon her the eyes of all the school. Children are not very considerate when any one of their number is in trouble; some laugh, point, whisper, stare, and peep. They perhaps do not mean any harm by it, but it certainly is not pleasant to the one who is in distress, and kind children feel very differently in a case like Bessie's, and in one where their companion has been really naughty and deserved punishment. Miriam Coles felt this difference, and though she could not do any thing to help Bessie, she showed by her manner that she was kind, and made Bessie *feel obliged to her*. But poor Bessie's spirits *were low, so that Miriam's kindness did not*

mend matters as far as tears were concerned ; and Bessie began to get the character of being sulky with her companions, as she had that of being dull with her school-mistress. Thus, I say, poor Bessie began to discover that school was not as delightful as she had expected. She had thought that if she went to school, she should be able to read, and she pictured to herself the delight and grandeur of sitting reading by herself, or even of reading a chapter in the bible to her parents. But, alas ! she was scarcely nearer this than when she first went to school. It is true she knew the large letters down to D well ; but she could not remember the small ones as she was taught them, nor could she in the great ones get over the difficulties of E and F. All she could do, she could not be sure she said them right—sometimes she did, sometimes she did not—and, as I have said, she was always in disgrace ; her mistress scolded her, her companions laughed at her, and even her father looked grave, when he heard that every one of the little ones, all younger than Bessie, had learned more than she had.

“ Every week the same story of Bessie,” said Mr. Baker, looking gravely but kindly at her ; “ only four letters in six weeks.”

Poor Bessie felt very miserable.

"No, no, as you say," continued he, "I don't like the stick, we must try to do without that, since you say Bessie is good, only so dull."

"Why, sir," said Esther, "she is the strangest child in the world; I am sure she would learn her letters her own way if I would let her; she learns them backwards, and upside down, and all sorts of fashions, but it is not a nice way of learning, and she will never say her A, B, C, if I let her do so."

"Well, come here, Bessie," said Mr. Baker, "and tell me all the letters you know."

Bessie could not look up or speak for her tears, but she came close to the kind gentleman, and stood very meekly by his side with her A, B, C card in her hand. Sadly thumbing it was, though, as Esther explained, it was the second she had had. Mr. Baker talked a little to the mistress, and meanwhile Bessie seemed to recover herself, so that she gave the names of the four first letters distinctly as Mr. Baker pointed to them. He then placed his finger on the hard E. Bessie looked across in her mistress's face, and was forming her mouth to an F, when Esther exclaimed, "There, sir, you see how it is, she *will* call E—F; she is a sad stupid child surely; the little ones learn as well again; it is a great *disgrace to Bessie*, who is a good two years older

than most of the others. I must say, sir, that Bessie Gray is the dullest child in the school."

"It is easier for the little ones to learn," said Mr. Baker, though he had never thought this before; "we must have patience with Bessie, and as she is older, we must let her learn her letters her own way. Now, Bessie," continued he, "don't cry, but speak out, and you shall learn your letters like a woman, and not like a child. Come, tell me what letters you know."

Bessie, with the confidence which knowledge gives, pointed to little h, and called it rightly.

"Well, and how do you know that letter so well which you have not learned?" asked Mr. Baker.

"Because of a chair," replied the little girl, in a very low voice.

The children began to titter.

Esther cried, "That, sir, is the strange way she gets her letters, nobody can teach her so."

Mr. Baker smiled and answered, "Well, I believe we must let Bessie have her way this time, as she is a good girl, you say; so now go on and tell me some more."

Bessie now pointed to small p and q, and b and d, and named them all rightly.

"Well, how do you remember these?" asked

Mr. Baker, "they are the hardest letters in the alphabet to learn."

"Please, sir, because one is *this* way and the other *that*," said Bessie, timidly, while the elder scholars nudged each other and whispered her answer laughingly.

"A very good reason indeed," said Mr. Baker, "you will soon read as well as the first class, if you go on so."

It was perceived that Mr. Baker was in earnest, and the tittering ceased quite suddenly. Bessie went on telling between twenty and thirty letters great and small, knowing them by some rule of her own; the last she told were u and n,—"because," she said, "one was up and the other down."

"How is it, Bessie," said Mr. Baker, "that you can tell these letters one from the other so well, and cannot find as good a reason for knowing E from F?"

Bessie was silent, and seemed puzzled.

"Cannot you see that E has a foot and F has none?" continued Mr. Baker.

Bessie said, "Yes, sir."

But this was not her difficulty. She knew the form of the letters, but could not remember *which name belonged to which, or which came first.*

"Bessie has a way of her own for learning her letters," said Mr. Baker, "and in a little time she will know them well. Let her learn them her own way, Esther.—But, Bessie," added he, speaking very clearly, so that the little girl could understand, "I shall be better pleased if you can go on with the alphabet regularly, as your mistress teaches the rest."

Bessie made her curtsy, and she thought she would try to please the kind gentleman who had been so good to her.

The next week Bessie repeated to Mr. Baker half the large and half the small alphabets, without a single mistake.

"There must have been some self-will in Bessie, I am afraid, sir," said her mistress, "for she has learned as quick as any other child ever since you spoke to her, and has never made any more ado about E and F."

Mr. Baker asked Bessie how she had remembered E and F.

"Please, sir," said the little girl, "because you told me."

"How did I tell you?" asked the gentleman.

"Please, sir, you said foot."

"Well, and what then?"

"Please, sir," again said Bessie, expecting

the laugh of her companions, and feeling very foolish, "because E treads upon F's heels."

All did laugh at Bessie's fancy, but with more respect than the week before. Bessie had proved that if she was stupid, she had a way of her own of fighting with her stupidity; and it looked very much as if she would get the better in the end. Mr. Baker too had made some of the elder ones feel very foolish by a remark he made, during his examination of them. As he left he said to Bessie, "If you can say me the whole of both alphabets next week, Bessie, I shall think you a clever girl."

Perhaps a lady would not have said this to Bessie; but gentlemen learn so easily, that they do not think the alphabet can be hard, even to a little girl. It however was a very hard task to Bessie to do as she had already done. She had not much memory, as any one can easily see, and she could only learn by figures and fancies of her own. As she read her alphabet, she had to recall to her mind all sorts of things—In one letter to fancy herself in the garden, in the next at home; now to see a wheelbarrow, and now the handle of the well. This plan was a trying one for a little girl, and it also caused her to be *very slow*. Sometimes she was obliged to shut *her eyes, that she might remember more cor-*

rectly; when her companions laughed, and her mistress often thought that she was inattentive, and blamed her for being slow.

Next week Bessie did say the whole of both alphabets to Mr. Baker, with only a very few mistakes or hesitations. "Mr. Baker did not call me clever," thought poor Bessie, "but I know I am not.—How much pains I have taken, and yet I have not done well after all."

I have given you this long history of Bessie's learning her alphabet, because it will show you what sort of a girl she is, and I dare say some of you will be inclined to call her stupid as herself and her companions did. But I do not care for this; I do not mean to say that you are not a great deal cleverer than little Bessie ever was or ever will be; and if so, I should only say that you must be much in fault if you do not learn all the quicker and become all the better.

About a year after this, Mr. Baker, the clergyman, married. There was a great talk about this in the place. Some thought it would make things all the better, and some all the worse. Others again thought all depended upon the sort of lady it was that he had married; and here again some said that good gentlemen often did not care about good wives, and it was all a "*turn-up*;" while Mr. Baker's particular ad-

mirers stoutly stood to it, that Mr. Baker was none of "your flighty ones," and that he would be quite as safe in his choice of a wife, as in his every-day dealings.—"And where have you known him to fail in those ever since he came among us?" asked Robert Gray, who was a great admirer of Mr. Baker's.

"Well, time will show," said one; "they say she's a young lady, and young ladies always wear thin shoes; and if so we shall not see much of her at Esther's school, or in our dirty lane."

"You've said wiser things than that, John, I've a notion," said Robert Gray.

"Well, time will show," replied John, "I know you won't allow a word against Mr. Baker ever since he took your Bessie by the hand."

"Aye, and before," said Robert; "but why should I be ashamed if it was so?"

Mrs. Baker was young, and she looked also very much as if she wore thin shoes. But before a fortnight was over, the new lady had called at every house, and had been introduced by her husband to the two schools in the place. By degrees these came very much under her care. She had not been used to schools of this sort before, and was inclined to take the opinion of the *mistresses and others* who had known more

about the scholars. Thus Bessie was for some time scarcely noticed by Mrs. Baker; for Esther always said she never could understand that child, and Mrs. Baker took Esther's word for it that Bessie was dull. One day Mrs. Baker was seeing Ann Roberts write a copy, as she occasionally did. Ann was still called the quickest girl in the school. She did, and said, and learned things in a minute, without seeming to take any trouble at all; and she always wrote in a very off-hand flourishing manner; so much so indeed that she did not give herself time to hear or understand the directions Mrs. Baker gave her. If you had seen and heard what went on, you would have supposed that Ann was either entirely deaf or entirely obstinate. But neither was the case: Ann was only inattentive, and too well satisfied with her own dashing style of filling her page. At last Mrs. Baker said, "Do you know, Ann, that I have told you four times the same thing?—how easily you would learn if you really did as you are bid!"

"That's very true, ma'am," said the mistress, "but Ann's quick and ready, and that makes her longer in the end than the slow ones."

"I am sure if that is really the case," replied Mrs. Baker, "it is very disgraceful to Ann; I had much rather she were dull and attentive."

"Well, ma'am, that is true enough also," said Esther, "for there is Bessie Gray, who never was very bright, but she pays attention, and I don't know if she will be long behind the best of them."

Bessie had been intently thinking over Mrs. Baker's advice to Ann, and she was considering in herself how good it was, and sighed to think how little she had ever made a point of herself doing as Mrs. Baker recommended. She was repeating to herself so intently Mrs. Baker's two remarks, with her eyes closed, that she should not forget them, that she heard nothing of Esther's observation on herself but her own name. "How easily we should learn," thought she, "if we really did as we are bid;—and Mrs. Baker had rather have us dull and attentive than only clever!—That's what I can be—dull and attentive—and that is what I will try to be, from this time; I can try—any body can try."

Bessie never forgot the impression which these remarks of Mrs. Baker's made upon her, and you will see whether it made her act as well as feel, for that is the use we are meant to make of our feelings. As yet Bessie, though so young, has seemed to make a good use of hers. She *felt* a great desire to go to school; she *felt* a *wish to learn to read*. She found the task hard

and tiresome. She knew her feeling was a good one, so she persevered, and with a great deal of labour she overcame her difficulties. Supposing she had not felt the desire of learning, but had looked upon it from the other side as a duty—as a duty to her parents or to God, she would have *acted* just the same. She would have laboured hard to do her very best. Thus it is in a great many other ways besides learning to read, that good feeling and right rules of conduct, or principle, as it is called, lead to the same point, which is, in fact, our duty to God.

CHAPTER II.

THE MULTIPLICATION TABLE.

BESSIE thought she had never been attentive till now. She was mistaken; she had been attentive; but now that Mrs. Baker's remark had so struck her, she began making a rule and a duty of what before seemed to come by accident—if it may so be said. However certainly now she was more strictly and steadily attentive and obedient than ever. Time and practice had made her lessons easier to her. She could now read well, and learn verses and hymns. She had also nearly learned her Multiplication Table. Time and practice had made her lessons easier to her; but still they cost her a great deal more labour than other children. She went on learning on the same plan on which she learned her alphabet. She could not learn by rote, or by heart, or by memory, as I dare say you can. In her hymns she could not remember except she knew and understood every word. I have often heard children say a whole hymn through from *beginning to end*, without a single mistake, when all

the time these children did not know what they had been saying, or what the hymn was about. They perhaps knew the meaning of every word, or almost every word, but did not know what the words meant put together. This is what we call saying a thing "like a parrot." Now there is no harm in very small children learning in this way—no harm at all. After a time, they come to know what the words mean, and in the course of months, or even years, the sense of all they have been learning comes into their minds very beautifully; and those who have been teachable and obedient, see every day more clearly many things that seem to have been hidden from them before, and understand better and better why it is that they were taught and treated in such and such a manner, and when they grow up, and have children to manage, they go on doing just the same.

But, to go back to what I was saying, though there is no harm in very young children learning in this way, like a parrot, there is harm and danger in elder ones doing so; it leads them to use their memory, and even their *hearing*, instead of their sense and understanding. It accustoms them to hear and repeat sacred words and the most solemn truths, without *considering* the import of what they say; and above

all, it assists in forming the sad habit of repeating the words of a prayer, without attempting to understand or to follow their meaning. For these reasons, it is dangerous for children to continue to repeat words without considering the sense, when they are old enough to profit by what they learn. Yet most children, I am sorry to say, do so, though you may be among those who do not. Most find it much easier to repeat by memory or sound, than by sense. Now this is what Bessie could never do, and this it was that helped to make her appear stupid, and even deceived her mistress into setting her down as very far behind the rest of the scholars. The cause was partly in Bessie's nature, and partly from her having begun to learn so much later than the rest. If you consider, however, what the appearance would be, you will perceive that Bessie would be long in learning and slow in speaking, and, considering her habit of shutting up her eyes quite tight, she would often seem stupid, and sometimes inattentive, while all the time she really understood what she said and what she learned a great deal better than any body else in the school, and this actually was the case. Often, what her companions took for stupidity, and in fact laughed at, in reality arose from Bessie being cleverer, or having actually

more understanding than the rest. Bessie also was very meek and gentle, as well as humble. She believed herself the stupidest in the school; and even when she thought she knew what she meant, she did not defend or explain herself. So, though often and often in class Bessie proved herself better than the rest, and though often and often she helped others, even the clever ones, in their difficulties, it still was set down in the school that Bessie was "the dullest scholar." This certainly would not have been if Esther Mills had understood Bessie better. Now, after this long explanation, I should like to give you an account of Bessie learning her Multiplication Table, and you will perceive how singularly like it was to her learning her A, B, C, two years before.

"Oh, ma'am," said Esther Mills to Mrs. Baker, one Monday morning, "I do wish you would be so kind as to hear Bessie say her Tables. Her Multiplication Table she almost knows, but she really is the dullest girl I ever had to do with—there's no getting her to learn."

"How is it, Esther," said Mrs. Baker, "that Bessie always does so much better with me, than she seems to do at other times? She is slow, and thinks before she speaks, but she always re-

peats her lessons correctly, and never gives me a wrong answer."

"I really can't say, ma'am," replied Esther; "she is the strangest child—I never could make her out. I always think there is self-will at the bottom, for she can often learn hard things easier than easy ones, and easier than the sharpest girl here; yet she makes such an ado about what a mere baby can learn, that I am quite ashamed of her."

"Well, I think Bessie must say her Multiplication Table to me," said Mrs. Baker, very kindly.

The little girl was very much pleased, for she liked Mrs. Baker, and often wished that lady to hear her as much as she did the others. Bessie had learned the Table from beginning to end; Mrs. Baker therefore said she would dodge her, and began accordingly. Bessie answered deliberately—not very slow—but made no blunder. Mrs. Baker was satisfied, and seemed to look to Esther to see if *she* was.

"Ah, ma'am," said Esther, "that is one of Bessie's strange fancies; she can say her table when dodged, better than straight forward; and she can tell in a minute what twice 8, and 3 times 5, and many other numbers make, but if

you ask her, 8 times 2, or 5 times 3, she screws up her eyes and stands like a simpleton."

"I was going to ask Bessie why she shut up her eyes in that way," said Mrs. Baker. "She never does so with me in the Sunday school."

"Oh, ma'am, it's a trick Bessie has always had, and it's no use my scolding her for it; if you ask her for the Table straight she'll do it worse."

Mrs. Baker now heard Bessie straight through, and herself could scarcely help smiling to see the odd faces poor Bessie sometimes made, but she said nothing then. Mrs. Baker perceived how much easier Bessie found it to say some numbers and some rows than others, and though she was clever at figures, she could not always account for it. So afterwards she questioned the little girl.—"Why is it, Bessie, that 12 seems so easy to you?"

"Please, ma'am, because it is 2 more than 10 every time till 60, and then it comes the same over again."

Some of the children laughed, and whispered, "What does she mean?" but Mrs. Baker seemed to understand what Bessie did mean, and then asked her why 9 seemed so easy to her.

"Please, ma'am," replied Bessie, "9 always *makes itself*."

Here the laughing and whispering was more audible than before; but Mrs. Baker seemed again perfectly to understand Bessie, and asked rather surprised, "Who told you that?"

"Please, ma'am, nobody."

"And now, Bessie," continued Mrs. Baker, "tell me yourself those numbers you find easy beside."

Bessie thought a little, but did not shut her eyes, and answered, "Those that belong to themselves, and those that are the same as themselves."

"What do you mean by those that belong to themselves?" asked Mrs. Baker.

"Like 21, 33, 35," replied the little girl, without any hesitation.

Mrs. Baker. "Is 24 one of these numbers?"

Bessie. "No, ma'am."

Mrs. Baker. "Why not?"

Bessie. "Because twice 12, and 3 times 8, and 6 times 4, make it."

Mrs. Baker. "And what, Bessie, did you mean by 'those numbers that are the same as themselves?'"

Bessie. "Those that are themselves over again, ma'am—like 16 and 49."

Mrs. Baker. "And are there any numbers *that are both these together?*"—Seeing Bessie

puzzled, she added, "I mean that, what you call, belong to themselves, and are themselves over again?"

"Yes," said Bessie, so readily, that it was evident she had observed it before,—“4, and all the uneven ones except 81.”

Mrs. Baker paused and seemed puzzled, while the children, even the elder ones, took advantage of the pause to titter and try to put Bessie out of countenance.

“The uneven what?” asked Mrs. Baker.

Bessie hesitated, and presently added, “Every other one;” on which several of the children quite laughed. Perhaps as Mrs. Baker had not rebuked them, they thought she did not disapprove of their behaviour.

Mrs. Baker had been looking over the Multiplication Table which she held in her hand, and now said very quietly, “I see what you mean, Bessie; you are quite right, every other *one*;—every other *square*, as we call those numbers, has also the other property you have discovered.”

“Please, ma’am,” said Bessie, very diffidently, “are 9, and 16, and 25, and the rest, called squares?”

“Yes, they are,” replied Mrs. Baker, “but I

should like to know if you can tell me if 13, 17, or 19, are in the Multiplication Table."

"No, ma'am," said Bessie, "nor 23, nor 29, nor 31, nor 37, nor...."

"Stop, Bessie," cried Mrs. Baker, laughing, for Bessie had closed her eyes and seemed to be intent on going on to the end; "that will do—I see you understand me; those numbers are called primes.—I can only say," continued Mrs. Baker to Esther, "that if Bessie goes on so, she will soon be the best arithmetician in the school."

"Well, ma'am," said Esther, "Bessie has a way of her own that I don't understand.—This is just what happened before with Mr. Baker, when she learned her alphabet, and he said the same. She does surprise me certainly by knowing as much as she does, and I think she wants a better scholar than me for a teacher."

Mrs. Baker now spoke to the rest of the children. "I suppose," said she, "by your manner, you thought Bessie and I were talking nonsense."

The poor girls looked foolish, and no wonder, because they had allowed themselves to act foolishly.

"I know," continued Mrs. Baker, "that the study of numbers is amusing to very few children; many can run over their tables pretty cor-

rectly, and do a few common sums, and that is quite enough ; but Bessie has shown a great deal of observation and ingenuity, and knows more about numbers, I suspect, than any of you."

Those who had made themselves so merry at the expense of Bessie now felt very downcast. Mrs. Baker did not want to be too severe, but she thought, as I dare say you do, that these thoughtless, and I may say ignorant girls, should have a lesson that might do them good, and also should be made to respect Bessie more than they did. She therefore continued, "Now, in order to set matters right, Bessie and I will try to make some of you understand her discoveries. First, you may remember, Bessie said, that the row 12 was easy to her, because it was 2 more than 10, every time till 60, and then the same over again. Now look at your Tables, and you, Bessie, explain what you meant."

Bessie replied, "12 is 2 more than 10; from 10 to 12 is 22, 2 times 12 are 24, and 24 is 2 more than 22, and so it goes on, 24, 36, 48, 60. Then it begins the same."

"Do you see what Bessie means?" asked Mrs. Baker.

Some few did—the rest did not; and those who did not, felt more silly and ignorant than *they need have done*; because they had laughed

at Bessie. Among them, was Ann Roberts. Mrs. Baker addressed herself especially to Ann, because Ann was always foremost and ready; but this view of numbers was new to her, and she had despised it as being Bessie's; besides, she did not choose to take the trouble of following Mrs. Baker and Bessie in the explanation. It seemed then all as nonsense to Ann, though she could not say so to Mrs. Baker, and did not appear altogether inattentive. That lady was not *displeased* with those who did not enter into the lesson; she said it was one, those only need follow who were inclined: she also remarked, that very few had a taste for this part of arithmetic. Ann felt much piqued and vexed, and she was resolved to pay attention to the rest, and know all about it. But she found it harder to fix her mind than she expected. She could make nothing of it, and at the end knew no more than at the beginning. She therefore laughed at the whole, afterwards, to her friends. "It was not worth my while to attend," said she, "or I would soon have rattled it all off;—as if I could not do what Bessie Gray can!"

"I must now return to the lesson," Mrs. Baker continued. "Now about the row 9, Bessie. *What did you mean by 9 always 'making it-self?'*"

"If you add the figures together they come up to 9," said Bessie; and on Mrs. Baker desiring it, continued, "twice 9 are 18; 1 and 8 are 9;—3 times 9 are 27; 2 and 7 are 9;—4 times 9 are 36; 3 and 6 are 9."

Mrs. Baker stopped Bessie, and asked if the rest understood. Every one who was forward enough understood this fast enough. All were highly pleased, and were running on all through the nines, trying the experiment, greatly delighted to find that it answered so well.

"This is curious!" exclaimed Miriam Coles, who was a lively little girl; "I wonder we never observed it before."

"What is more curious," said Mrs. Baker, "is, that it is the same whatever number of figures, or digits, as they are called, a sum may be. One of you say a high number."

Ann, who was always ready, named 8640.

"Well," said Mrs. Baker, "that will divide by 9, without remainder. Try it."

Ann did try it, and found the result was 960.

"Now can any body tell if 960 will divide by 9, without any remainder?" asked Mrs. Baker, who, when nobody spoke, looked at Bessie.

"I think it will not," said she.

"Can you guess what will remain?"

"If it was 96," replied Bessie, "6 would remain."

"And 6 will remain now, though it is 960," returned the lady. "Try it."

They did, and so it came. Mrs. Baker then explained how to add the digits of any number together, so as to prove whether or not it would divide by 9, without remainder, and also, what the remainder will be. For instance, 8640. 8 and 6 are 14, and 4 are 18. 1 and 8 are 9. Another way is, 8 and 6 are 14. 1 and 4 are 5. 5 and 4 are 9. Both ways come to the same thing, and if you have a number with 100 figures in it, it will be just the same. Now take the other number, 960. 9 and 6 are 15. 1 and 5 are 6. Or, 9 is 9, and 6 over; 6 will be the remainder—as it was found to be in a minute. Mrs. Baker explained all this. Ann Roberts was mightily charmed with this secret at the first, but soon got puzzled among the additional numbers. She then thought it stupid, and gave over; other followed up Mrs. Baker in this part of the lesson and went on whispering, with their heads together, over their slates, proving number after number by the new rule. So engrossed were these, that they heard none of the rest of Mrs. Baker's lesson. She here showed those *who were attending*, a little plan of turning this

to account, in proving sums. It became very interesting to those who had given their minds to it from the first, but was very dull to the others.

Mrs. Baker proceeded. "Bessie talked next of those numbers which she called 'belonging to themselves;' say what numbers you meant, Bessie."

"21, 33, 35," replied the little girl.

"Well, these are numbers of your own, Bessie," said Mrs. Baker, smiling; "I do not know that they have any name given them. You mean numbers that have only two factors, as we call them, besides 1 and themselves."

Mrs. Baker here fully explained what factors are, and then went on, "For instance, take 21. —What is 21 multiplied by 1?"

Some really did not know; some said it made no number; another said it was nothing. However others either knew or had learned that once 21 is 21.

"Also 3 times 7 makes 21," said Mrs. Baker, "but it has no other factors. 35 has the same nature: 5 times 7 makes 35, and no factors beside. You see, other numbers have many factors; these have but two; 24, as we said before, has several."

"Yes, 2 times 12, 3 times 8, 4 times 6," said Miriam.

"The next numbers Bessie spoke of were those she called 'themselves over again,'" continued Mrs. Baker, "such as 25, 36. These are found by multiplying a number by itself."

Mrs. Baker now made them multiply several numbers by themselves: 3 times 3=9, 4 times 4=16, 5 times 5=25, &c. &c.

"These are called squares, as you heard me tell Bessie," added she; "they are called squares because they make a square, and I will show you how."

She then desired Esther to give her the penny box, which held the pence for Christmas clothing, unlocked it, and counted out 36 pennies. She placed first 1 penny, which she told them being 1 times 1, was the square of 1. This seemed to amuse Miriam greatly. Then she made them go on to 2 times 2, and placed 4 pennies so as to form the figure of a square, thus :: Next, she set a row of pennies round 2 sides of this figure; that is, 5 more pennies, which made 9. This still formed a square, and was 3 every way, thus ::: So she went on to 4 times 4, 16, till she came to 6 times 6, which *required all the pennies she had taken out of the box. They made a very nice regular looking*

figure on the table, where she left them, while she went on to finish her explanation of Bessie's remarks.

"One of Bessie's rules is rather hard, and I shall pass it over at present," said she, "it is the one you all laughed so much at; but I can explain about some other numbers, which are not in the Multiplication Table. Say some of them, Bessie."

"13, 17, 19, 23, 29," said Bessie.

"These are called primes," replied Mrs. Baker, "they can be divided by nothing but 1 and themselves. Now try if you can divide 23 by any thing else, without remainder."

No one could.

"Then all the numbers that are not in the Multiplication Table are primes!" exclaimed Miriam, pleased at a new piece of knowledge.

"Is that right, Bessie?" asked Mrs. Baker.

"No, ma'am," said Bessie, "many can be divided that are not in the Multiplication Table. 38 can be divided."

"Very good, Bessie, 2 times 19 are 38," replied Mrs. Baker. "Are primes ever even numbers, Bessie?" continued she.

"Primes can never be even," answered Bessie.

"Quite right, Bessie, primes are always uneven," said Mrs. Baker; "you know, all even

numbers can be divided by 2, but a prime cannot be divided at all. But what do you say to 39, Bessie, is that a prime? It is not in the Multiplication Table."

"It is not a prime, though," said Bessie; "3 times 13 are 39."

"Then you see, Miriam, you were mistaken in supposing that all numbers not in the Multiplication Table are primes. 38 and 39 are not in the Multiplication Table, yet they are neither of them primes."

"I knew both would divide when you mentioned them," said Miriam; "by the new rule, I saw 39 would divide by 3, though I did not know how many times 3 would make it."

"Explain how you saw this," said Mrs. Baker.

"I said to myself," replied Miriam, "3 and 9 are 12, 1 and 2 are 3, 9 will divide by 3, and 3 over makes one more 3; so I saw it would divide."

"That shows you have paid attention, Miriam," observed Mrs. Baker.

Of course Miriam was pleased.

"If I am pleased with Miriam," continued the lady, "without my saying a word, you must all perceive how pleased I am with Bessie Gray. *She has shown more observation and ingenuity than any here,—all by herself, too, and when*

you thought she was making mistakes. I wish to show you all I am much pleased with Bessie, and you shall see what I will do."

Mrs. Baker here took out her purse and put down 3 silver shillings on the table where the pennies were spread, saying, "36 pence make—what?"

"3 shillings," said several.

She then put the shillings into the box, called Bessie up to her side, and told the little girl she might take the 36 pennies home, as a memorial of her having made a good use of them.

Bessie was too much amazed to say a word at first, till Mrs. Baker asked her what she would do with them.

"Please, ma'am," said she, colouring with pleasure, "I should like to have them put on my card for Christmas, but I will ask mother."

They were put on Bessie's card, and the end was, that Bessie was able to buy a larger and warmer cloak for the winter than the rest of the children.

I need scarcely say how happy Bessie felt as she walked home with her heavy load. Half of what had happened would have been enough to delight Bessie. It was a great satisfaction to her to find that other people had observed what she had done in the Multiplication Ta-

ble, and that there were really names given to those numbers whose properties she had discovered for herself. Clever children—and, though Bessie is called so dull, I hardly know how we can help calling her clever—clever children are pleased with new pieces of knowledge; and though those Bessie had learned to-day were of no apparent use, it was for a long time a great pleasure to her to consider her old friends, the favourite numbers, under their new names of primes, squares, digits, and factors, all of which Mrs. Baker had very nicely explained. I will just remark that Bessie could never have made the discoveries she did, if she had been taught her Multiplication Table from any other but the old fashioned square shaped one. They did not use at her school the more modern one, which indeed saves a little trouble, but does not show the beautiful order and regularity of numbers as the old square Table does. I must go on, however, to the rest of Bessie's happy feelings, for her pleasure as to her newly acquired knowledge was put off for a time to make way for what was more delightful still, as she tripped along, now and then with a step more dancing than walking or running. It was not *so much the money*—though that certainly was *a pleasant thought*—it was the distinction the

made her feel so light and joyous. Mrs. Baker was pleased with her, and had said so before every body; she hoped perhaps she was less dull, perhaps even she was not quite as stupid as she had herself supposed. Now she should get on better and not be so looked down upon. These thoughts made her manner quite different even to her father and mother that very day.

“You remember my bright key, Jane,” said Robert, who was highly delighted about his little girl, to his wife in the evening; “our Bess will beat the best of them after all. But now don’t go and spoil the girl: old heads can’t stand praise, let alone young ones.”

CHAPTER III.

HYMNS.

I MUST now pass over above a year, and come to an event which will always make a sensation in a school; this was the death of a little girl who had been one of the scholars in the school. Miriam Coles' death, however, made as slight a sensation as possible. She had been ill nearly a whole year, had not been seen out of her father's house for nine or ten months, and for the last three months, she had scarcely been expected to live from day to day; so that this event was not likely to make the same impression as it would have done, if Miriam had been more lately among the rest, or had been able to see her companions to the last. Every body in the village talked over the little girl's death. Many went to poor Mrs. Coles, to comfort her, and tell her what a happy release it was for her, as well as her poor suffering child, while some held back, saying that comforters were not always comforts, and the mother's heart had its own sorrow. *Little Miriam's complaint* had been a consumption,

or, as some called it, an atrophy; and she had passed so quietly away that except for the funeral, the children perceived nothing unusual and felt no loss. Every thing the next day went on exactly the same, except that Esther desired the first class to look over the hymn which so many of you know, beginning,

“Death has been here, and borne away
A sister from our side.”

Very correctly these lines were repeated to Mrs. Baker the next Monday, by most, especially by Ann Roberts, who was highly praised by her schoolmistress. “So different, ma’am,” said she, “from Bessie Gray. She is slower than ever again, I think. There’s really no such thing as making her learn this hymn.”

“Perhaps Bessie can say it to me,” said Mrs. Baker, observing the little girl’s downcast looks.

Bessie stood up and repeated the first line very slowly and distinctly—very different from many children I have heard, who repeat well and remember every word, but allow themselves to run over their lessons, and even their hymns or texts, as if the object were to try how many words they could say in the course of a minute or half a minute. Bessie never said her hymns *in this way*. Mrs. Baker often remarked it was

quite a pleasure to hear Bessie repeat her lessons, especially her hymns, for she said them gently and even, and in exactly the right time. Each word followed the last, exactly as the ear would desire; and there was no unpleasing tone, which so often spoils the best repeated verses. I have heard a great many children repeat hymns in different parts of the country, but I never heard more than half a dozen at all equal Bessie Gray in correctness and seriousness. I cannot help thinking those children who repeat in a confused manner, or very fast, or very unequal, or thoughtlessly, gazing about them perhaps, or thinking very little of the sacred words and ideas they are repeating—I cannot help thinking, I say, that such children, if they had heard Bessie, would try to model their manner in future by hers. And this most of you can do, even though you have never heard Bessie, if you only choose to set about watching your tones and mode, as if you were listening to another person, and resolve to correct one by one every fault you perceive.

We must now go back to Bessie in this particular hymn, as we shall find that she had, like others, occasional difficulties and drawbacks, *which we must try to understand better than her companions, or even Esther herself.* Bessie

began in a low voice, and repeated distinctly the first line,

“Death has been here, and borne away.”

At the end of which she made a full pause, while Mrs. Baker patiently waited without speaking. Esther however broke the silence, “Ah, ma’am,” said she, “that is the way Bessie serves me, every now and then. Sometimes I think she is really getting on, when a fit of this kind comes over her, and she seems to have less sense than a mere babe.—I am quite ashamed of you, Bessie,” added her mistress, “all the little ones have learned this hymn and said it well.”

“Begin again, Bessie,” said Mrs. Baker, “I dare say you know it.”

Bessie did begin again, and repeated the first line just as before—still getting no farther.

“Do you know the hymn, Bessie?” asked Mrs. Baker.

“Yes, ma’am,” replied Bessie, “I think I know it.”

“Then you see, ma’am, it must be obstinacy with Bessie,” said Esther, “and if you please I should like to punish her this time.”

“I do not think it is obstinacy, Esther,” replied Mrs. Baker. “Go on, Bessie, at any other verse you please.”

After a little pause, Bessie with an effort, closing her eyes, resolutely began,

“ We cannot tell who next may fall
Beneath thy chastening rod,
One must be first—but let us all
Prepare to meet our God.”

And she continued to the end.

Mrs. Baker said nothing more, but told Bessie she might sit down. Esther thought that Mrs. Baker humoured Bessie's strange whims, but she made no remark. Soon after Mrs. Baker left.

“ Only look at Bessie Gray,” whispered Ann Roberts to Susan Morris; “ how stupid she is; she has been all the morning over her sum, though I know she can do it well enough. She has been crying over it the last ten minutes.— Look there, she dries her tears, and thinks nobody sees her.”

“ Well, she can't help it, Ann,” said Susan, “ she can't learn like you, she is dull, that's not her fault.”

Ann here moved so as Bessie could hear her, and in a louder tone observed to Susan, “ I say, Susan, let us sing those pretty lines,

Multiplication
Is vexation,
Division is as bad,

The Rule of Three
Doth puzzle me,
And Practice drives me mad.

Or I should rather say,

Multiplication
Is vexation,
Division makes us sigh,
The Rule of Three
Doth puzzle *we*,
And Practice makes us cry.

Poor thing!" continued she, in a pitiful tone, "shall I help it?—Oh, no, it can do any thing; it can find out squares and thingums, which we *dull* ones can't understand."

Ann then returned to Susan, and continued, "I would not be as stupid as Bessie for something; and she has no sense or spirit in her; if she had, she would make more of herself than she does, and not be the laugh of the school as she is. Nobody observes it, but Bessie does learn, though she is dull."

"But Mrs. Baker observes it, Ann," replied her friend, "and even you sometimes apply to Bessie."

"*I!*" cried Ann, with a laugh, "I like a little fun when I apply to Bessie. Bessie Gray is no conjuror surely."

Susan thought, and wished to observe, that Bessie was kind and good, and often before Ann even, in her lessons; but Susan was what is called afraid of Ann, and therefore finding her first defence of Bessie so unwelcome, she held her tongue. She thus suffered Ann to feel and express, and probably to encourage, a harsh and untrue opinion of Bessie. A few quiet words from Susan might have made a difference, but Susan was afraid. Nothing is more common and yet more cowardly than such conduct. We have a great many directions in the Bible, about helping "the poor," "the innocent," and "the oppressed." Many think they never have an opportunity of doing such things all their lives, because perhaps they are poor themselves, or ignorant, or have no power. But there are ways of helping the poor, the innocent, and the oppressed, that are open to every body, sometimes even to children. Susan had here an opportunity. She knew that Bessie was "innocent," yet she suffered Ann to treat Bessie and speak of her as if she were in some sense unworthy. This is a behaviour of which children of really good feelings would be ashamed. It was not as though Ann had been Susan's superior in any way, *when it might have been improper for Susan to speak; but Ann and Susan were not only*

equals, but Susan was the elder. Of course Ann in the present case was the worst of the two, because Ann had been positively bad; she had quite gone out of her way to be unkind, and had betrayed other feelings quite as unchristian; yet Ann could answer readily any question that any lady asked her on the nature and punishment of sin. She could quote in a moment such a verse as,

“ To do to others as I would
That they should do to me,
Will make me honest, kind, and good,
As children ought to be.”

And yet it never properly entered her head that in feeling as she often did towards Bessie, she was not “kind,” and was sinning against another in thought, word, and deed. But though it did not enter her head, it did enter her heart. She often felt a sore and uncomfortable sensation after little incidents and conversations, which she found it a hard matter to get over; yet she did get over it, and nobody knew any thing about it.—She did get over it, and did just the same, or worse, again and again.

We must now return to Bessie and her sums. Perhaps somebody already suspects that Bessie's *sums* had nothing to do with her tears, and if

so, then somebody is right. The truth was, that poor Bessie grieved over the loss of little Miriam more than any in the school. When they were at school together, these two little girls were very good friends. Miriam Coles was quick and lively. She was a year or two older than Bessie, and much forwarder. She had befriended Bessie in the worst part of her trials during the first months she was at school. Bessie had learned many of her letters by asking Miriam their names, whenever the form of one struck her as like some of her fancies. After Bessie had got over the drudgery of learning to read, she advanced rapidly, and Miriam was surprised to find the little girl much more her equal in learning, or rather understanding, than she had expected. Insensibly these two children became friends. Ann Roberts used constantly to laugh at Miriam for choosing the dullest girl in the school for her companion. "We hear," said she, "that 'birds of a feather flock together,' but it is not so here, for *Miriam* is sharp and brisk enough."

Ann might be in jest in such sayings, and mean no harm, but she was going the way to part chief friends, which we know is accounted a *sin in the Bible*. Certainly she would have succeeded if *Miriam* had been a different sort of

child. Miriam was lively, but not thoughtless or unkind, and she only smiled at Ann's sallies, instead of being laughed out of her friend as many have been under similar circumstances. Miriam, though so brisk and lively, was a delicate child. She came from the farther part of the village, so when the weather was rough she used to bring her dinner to school, and when Bessie could do as she pleased, and was not wanted at home, she did the same, simply to keep Miriam company. At these times these little girls talked of many things pleasant to them—their flowers and their little books, their friends and their companions. They liked well enough to play when others were with them, and wished it; but when they were alone together, they generally sat and talked, and looked over their books. Sometimes they had more serious talk: perhaps a text they both had to learn, or a line in one of their hymns, would lead to this; or perhaps it so happened without any thing of this kind to make them begin. One conversation they once had, fixed itself very firmly in Bessie's mind, and caused her many serious thoughts. It occurred a year before this time; before Miriam began to decline. Since Mrs. Baker came, it had been the custom to read every morning *some* of the psalms for the day. It happened

to be the 6th day of the month. It also was Monday, and Mrs. Baker had been at the school, and had asked a few questions on the psalms as usual. On the 7th verse of the 34th psalm, she asked, "Do we ever hear of angels delivering those who fear God in the Bible?"

All children, at least nearly all, have a great desire to know something about angels—what they are like, what are their forms, whether they can see and hear us, and whether they can be quite near us, and we all the time know nothing about it. Most children, I say, think of such things, but these two little girls happened to talk as well as think; and as they said so many things which many others think, I will relate the whole conversation. Miriam began abruptly with, "Bessie, do you ever think of angels?"

"Oh, yes," said Bessie, "indeed I do; I think of angels almost every night: and it was so strange that Mrs. Baker should ask us questions on that verse to-day, for when we read, before she came, I was thinking a great deal about angels in the Bible, and was fancying what they could be like."

"I wonder what they are like!" said Miriam, "*I often wonder about that. How I should like to know—should not you, Bessie?*"

"Yes, very much," said Bessie.

"I wonder if very learned clever men know," continued Miriam; "do you think such a clergyman as Mr. Baker knows? he is very learned, and knows so much."

"Yes," replied Bessie, "but I remember a hymn which seems to say differently;" and Bessie repeated the following verses:

"No wisdom keen, no genius bright,
The unseen world can scan,
A veil conceals alike its light
From babe and wisest man.
Not goodness even, power nor strength,
Can draw that veil aside,
For only Death's strong hand at length
Can ope an entrance wide."

Both little girls were silent for a space; for though Miriam had never heard these lines before, her mind was prepared to understand their meaning, and Bessie repeated them so clearly, that it was as easy to follow their sense as if the book lay before them.

"Yet," presently observed Miriam, "I should like to know all about angels and heaven: I always like the verses in my hymns that speak of them;—do you, Bessie?"

"I can always learn those hymns better than

any," said Bessie; "I like to think of angels being near us, though we cannot see them. You know the Cradle Hymn begins,

' Hush, my dear, lie still and slumber,
Holy angels guard thy bed !'

And the hymn we say every night is sure to remind us of the angels who are near to watch over us."

"Just say the words, Bessie," said Miriam.

"You know the words, don't you?" asked the other little girl, surprised; "you say them every night."

"Yes, I know I do," replied Miriam, a little ashamed, "but I do not attend as you do. *You* never say your prayers or any thing without thinking of them."

"You are quite wrong there, Miriam," said Bessie, in her turn ashamed; "but this is the verse I mean :

' I lay my body down to sleep ;
Let angels guard my head,
And through the hours of darkness keep
Their watch around my bed.'

After I have said that, I cannot help thinking of *angels, and how it is they can be near, and how*

it is they can take care of us, and we not see them and hear them."

"I never observed that verse so much before," said Miriam; "it is almost the same meaning as the verse in the psalms which we had to-day,—'The angel of the Lord tarrieth round about them that fear Him, and delivereth them.' But, Bessie, how strange it is that you know this hymn so well. Don't you remember how long you were learning it? I thought you never would say it. I learned it much quicker, and yet now you know it better, and understand it better than me, or even Ann."

Bessie said nothing.

Miriam continued, "Why are you so long learning, Bessie?"

Bessie, after a pause, gave the answer that always satisfied herself and all about her, and replied, with some shame and pain, "Because I am so stupid. You know every body sees how dull I am, like nobody else."

"But then you always understand, Bessie; and sometimes you learn so quick," objected Miriam.

"Oh," cried Bessie, "it is easy enough to learn, when we understand a thing. I learned that verse about angels very quick; it was easy, *because I understood it; but I am so dull that*

there are a great many verses that I don't understand, and then I cannot learn or remember them at all."

"Then I suppose you did not understand many lines in this hymn, for how long you were!" said Miriam.

"I could not understand the first verse," returned Bessie, "and even now I find it very hard to keep on understanding it."—And she repeated it:

" ' And now another day is gone,
I'll sing my Maker's praise,
My comforts every hour make known
His providence and grace.' "

I was so long before I could at all understand,

'make known
His providence and grace.' "

"And then," continued Miriam, "you would say for a long time, like many others,

' My sins how great *they* sum.' "

"Yes, I know," replied the little girl, "others soon corrected it, but I never could tell whether the word should be 'they,' or 'their,' till I understood that it meant, 'How great is the sum of *my sins*,' and then I never made a mistake

afterwards. Then in the last verse, I could not see the meaning of,

‘ Since thou wilt not remove ;’

I used always to think,—remove what ? This is so very hard to remember ; don’t you find it so ?”

“ Oh, Bessie,” said Miriam, “ I do not think of my hymns and verses as much as you do. I wish I was like you, but it always makes me try to attend more when I talk to you. You never learn without thinking on your lessons.”

“ I am obliged to think on them so much more than others,” said Bessie, “ because I am so slow and dull. How quick Ann is !”

“ Yes, but in the end Ann does not say her lessons as well as you, or understand them half as well. I always wonder they call you dull, for though you are slow you are sure, and you never forget, while every body else, even Ann, forgets, and often answers quite wrong.”

“ That is because Ann guesses ; which is a pity,” said Bessie.

“ You never guess,” observed Miriam.

“ No, I am not clever enough to guess,” replied the other. “ I am obliged to know things really, or I could not answer at all.”

“ Well, that is true, Bessie ; Ann is clever, and guesses, and is so often right, by memory

and chance, that the few times she is wrong are not observed ; others, who are ignorant, but not so clever and quick, are soon obliged to give up guessing, if they try to guess ; and if they do not, they are silent, and never answer at all, except they are made."

"I am sure the right way of doing things is the best and easiest in the end," observed Bessie, little thinking she was making a very good remark, not only as to lessons, but as to many other things. "And I never should like to *guess*. It does not seem true to guess and guess as some do."

"It does seem like making believe that we are cleverer than we are ; I never thought of that before, but I am glad I never guessed," replied Miriam.

In this way the little girls often talked, and Bessie felt far happier to sit thus with her friend, than to be playing about ; though she often did play about as others did. Miriam was of a much gayer turn, though she had not the health and strength of other village children for their plays and pastimes. After she became ill, she showed a much more thoughtful and serious temper, as was to be expected, for she had *always been a good obedient child, and had a great desire to love and serve God, and become*

one of the lambs of the flock of Christ her Saviour.

This visible change in Miriam affected Bessie greatly. It seemed to her sad; for she had been so used to see Miriam gay and lively, that there appeared something out of place in finding her more serious than Bessie herself. Yet Bessie liked to hear her talk over the psalms and chapters that happened to be read. This lasted but a short time, for soon after poor Miriam fell ill, she declined so rapidly as almost immediately to keep her bed, and she became so weak that Bessie was not allowed to go and talk to her as before. This was a greater grief to Bessie than any one suspected. The thought of Miriam often quite filled her mind, after she had heard any painful news concerning her friend's decline. She often longed to see her and be near her. She thought if only they would allow her to do so, she should do no harm—she would either sit by quietly, or pick out chapters, verses, or hymns, which were Miriam's especial favourites. But the doctor had said that such things would do Miriam harm, so Bessie could not go. Bessie however knew that she might pray for her friend, though she could not see her, and though she was but a child, she tried to do so. She *hardly* knew how to pray for her, or what to pray

for, but often she would kneel and pray as well as she could, with the tears streaming down her face. After a time Miriam lay on her bed almost insensible, and without motion. It was a sad thing to see the gentle little girl. Miriam had been a fair, rosy, merry child, though never strong.—Now she had lost her bloom; her cheek was as pale as marble, and her face so altered, that, like her character, it seemed to belong to one many years older. Her frame wasted away every day, so that a stranger in the room would scarcely have known that there was any one lying upon the bed, though it was a mattress. The doctor left off giving her any medicine, and the poor little girl seemed to live without eating. Yet though she appeared insensible, whatever feelings she showed were always good and gentle ones; and if those who saw her wept, their tears were not altogether melancholy. It *was*, as I said, a sad thing to see the dear child lie week after week and month after month, as she did; but those who loved her were able to find two especial consolations in her case: one was, that she had always been good and obedient, and through her illness had been pious and uncomplaining; for though she was but young, she *had shown, as far as she could, true faith and trust in her Saviour*, and had borne all that He

had seen fit to lay upon her, as from His hand, with a heart thankful and resigned. The other consolation was, that now she had no pain, but lay between life and death, vanishing away, as it were, into a happier home, where she would never more know pain or sorrow, and where sin and misery are banished far away.

No one thought more of these things respecting Miriam, than Bessie, though she was so young. The few times that Bessie had seen her friend after she fell ill, Miriam had talked so much of sin and its nature, that Bessie could not but feel more than ever serious.—“It is not, Bessie, that I know more about sin than I did before,” said she, “but I think more of many things I used to do, and let others do, without caring, as much as I do now, whether they were right or wrong.—I think I should be more particular now,” added she, with tears; “you, Bessie, were always more so than me, so you cannot understand how I feel.”

Such speeches as these dwelt on Bessie's memory, and made her think what a good religious child Miriam had been; but, more than all, the conversation they had had about angels excited her. After she had lost Miriam, she used to remember and treasure up every word. *It seemed to her as though she had once talked*

to an angel.—“For,” thought she, “now dear Miriam knows perhaps all about heaven and angels, and that is what she wished, even when she was quite well. How happy she must be! And now, though a poor ignorant little child, how much more she knows than the wisest man in the whole world.” Then she repeated to herself the lines she had said to Miriam during their conversation, beginning,

“No wisdom keen, no genius bright.”

“How true that is,” thought she,

“ ‘Only death’s strong hand at length
Can ope an entrance wide.’ ”

How little we both thought that it would be so with Miriam when we talked together.”—Then she remembered her feelings at Miriam’s funeral, when she felt an impulse of leaping down into the grave, as if that would lead her once again to her friend, and to the knowledge of all she desired—and her tears fell fast. She was roused from these thoughts by hearing a voice, which was Ann Roberts’s, in a jeering tone close by her repeat,

Multiplication
Is vexation,
Division is as bad,

The Rule of Three
Doth puzzle me,
And Practice drives me mad.

Poor Bessie now remembered she had her sum before her, and found her slate was wet with tears. Some of the figures were quite effaced; she was ashamed to apply for them again, because of her tears, and she got into disgrace that day for having neglected her summing.

You will now be able to judge about Bessie better than Esther or Ann Roberts, because you have before you all that was in her head and her mind at that moment, which was an extraordinary one for Bessie. She was not accustomed to let any thoughts or fancies interfere with her lessons; she always drove them away till she had time for them; but now she forgot to drive them away, her mind was so engrossed with Miriam and all the serious thoughts which the loss of her dear little friend brought. And, again, the less others thought of Miriam, the more she did; she could not help it. She could not bear to hear one child after another repeat the hymn,

“Death has been here, and borne away
A sister from our side,”

as carelessly as if there was no particular mean-

ing in the words,—some smiling if they made a mistake, or after the last line, turning to their place and whispering and laughing to their companions just as usual. Bessie had loved Miriam, and had not forgotten her, as others did, so she could not do so ; and if it had been any other child in the school, about whom she had not cared as much, Bessie could not have taken it as most of the others seemed to do.

It does not seem necessary to account farther for Bessie's hesitation in repeating her hymn to Mrs. Baker.

CHAPTER IV.

CONDUCT.

ONE day Bessie was sent by her mother to a neighbour's, with a packet of grocery which Mrs. Gray had been commissioned to bring home from the neighbouring town. It was just after school time, and a lovely day; one of those unexpectedly hot suns which sometimes occur for a short time in the month of April. Bessie's packet was heavy, and she stopped while she untied her favourite cloak, and hung it over her arm. After this, she walked on with a lighter step, meeting the fresh breeze, and thinking how pleasant it was to feel summer coming back again. Sally O'Neile, the neighbour to whom she was going, lived at the bottom of a short lane, where were two or three cottages. She had turned some steps down this lane, when she saw Ann Roberts running towards her very fast. She knew that Ann had undertaken to see little Fanny O'Neile home that day, as Mrs. O'Neile was out, and the elder girl, Emma, stayed at home to take care of *the baby*, a boy not two years old. Bessie

thought, "What a hurry Ann is in to get home again;" but as Ann came nearer, Bessie perceived that something unusual must have happened. Ann was flying along, rather than running; her bonnet hanging back by the strings, her cloak streaming far behind in the air, her hands stretched out before her, and her eyes gleaming, strangely terrified. Altogether, she was a wild-looking figure, and enough to alarm all who saw her. As she passed Bessie, she more loudly shrieked out something which Bessie could not hear. Bessie paused, and almost stood still at the moment Ann shot by. But the pause she made was scarcely perceptible. Bessie had thought and presence of mind; her very slowness was of use to her on such an occasion, for as she was not quick to understand all her lessons the very first moment, so she was not quick to feel exactly the same as those about her felt. She was able to *think*, that is to say, rather than be frightened. Some little girls, for instance, would have been so alarmed at seeing Ann behave in such a singular manner, that, either from fear at they knew not what, or from a sort of curiosity, they would have turned and ran after her. Bessie, on the contrary, by not *allowing herself to be frightened or bewildered, perceived, by many small signs, that whatever*

danger there was, was *behind* Ann; that Ann was running away from it, perhaps seeking for help, and as she thought this, she in a moment set down her heavy parcel, and began running onward as fast, though not as wildly, as Ann herself. "What can it be?" thought she; "how I wish I could have heard what it was Ann cried out as she passed me." As she thought this, the tone of Ann's words returned to her ear, as is often the case after a sound itself is gone; and again, in more and more alarm, Bessie thought, "Surely, she said, 'Fire! fire!'" But there were no flames or smoke to be seen, though now she was close to the cottages.

Bessie, at this moment, began to hear most frightful screams; all at once they seemed to burst upon her, for she had been running so fast, and so anxiously, that the sounds did not reach her ear so soon as might have been. She rushed past the closed door of one of the cottages, and made for the one where she guessed the mischief was. In half an instant she was in the room, and a scene presented itself which would have daunted many an older heart than Bessie's. There stood Emma and Fanny O'Neile, both looking the image of terror and helplessness, screaming and shrieking at the highest pitch of their voices. There they stood motion-

less ; their eyes fixed upon, and following, in the wildest affright, an object which was almost enough to excuse their terror and their helplessness. This object appeared to be nothing but a column of flames ; but, unlike the two sisters, who were apparently chained to the earth, it flitted about, here and there, in constant motion, uttering sounds, which, though faint compared with the two girls, at once assured Bessie that the figure was none other than the unfortunate little Robert, though she could trace nothing of the form of a child. Bessie, without a pause, almost without trembling hands, unfolded her cloak from her arm, flew after the poor little boy, and entirely enclosed him, flames and all, in her capacious cloak. For some seconds, she had to fight with the flames, which seemed resolved still to burst forth, and worked their way here and there, in spite of all her efforts. With her hands and her cloth cloak, she at length beat them out and stifled them, till nothing but smoke remained.

All this takes a long time to relate ; but, in reality, there was not one minute's space from the moment that Bessie passed Ann, and that when the former entered the cottage. In a few *more seconds* the flames were entirely *extinguished*, and now perhaps was the moment of

the greatest trial for Bessie. Herself was nearly choked with the smoke, and the exertion she had made almost overpowered her; but worse than both, was her dread of the state of the poor little boy. She feared to withdraw her cloak and look upon him; she thought it quite impossible that he should be living, or if living, that he could long survive. His sisters crowded over him, while Bessie, now in great agitation, began to unloose her cloak from about the poor child.

The first view was very alarming. His clothes on one side were nearly entirely burnt off, and on the other, as black and tender as tinder. After a little time, he recovered from his fright enough to hold up his arm, and cry, "Arm, arm!"

Bessie had never seen a burn before, but supposed this was one, though it did not look any thing like as bad as she expected. The injury to the arm was the worst, but not the only one; he was badly burnt, but not near as much as might have been expected. He had on some thick clothes, and over all a frock of some woollen material, which repelled the fire for a considerable time. Besides this, his mother had listened to the advice of Mrs. Baker (who had given her an old dress for the children's winter garments), and had made them long

sleeves for the winter. But for these happy accidents, the poor child must have been most dreadfully burned, if not lost his life.

After a little time, Ann returned with several of the neighbours. Bessie, after seeing Robert safe in nurse Holloway's hands, got quietly away in the confusion, as she remembered that she had left her parcel on the ground in the road. Perhaps in their haste and confusion none of the neighbours had seen it, for there it was still, and Bessie, considering that the cottage was in great commotion at that moment, carried it back to her mother's.

Fire was not the only danger that poor Robert had escaped. It seemed that his clothes caught fire while Emma ran out to meet Ann and Fanny, as the two latter returned from school. They all stood gossiping and laughing outside the door, for what seemed to them a minute, but what was probably much longer. Ann's face was turned to the cottage; she was the first to perceive what had happened. She rushed in at the door, and with a sort of half presence of mind, she ran to the fire, seized a kettle of water, and proceeded to follow the poor child round the room, endeavouring to direct the stream from the mouth of the kettle upon the increasing flames. Happily her fright, and the constant

movement of both parties, rendered her efforts ineffectual, and presently the steam from the water, as it lay on the floor, made her sensible that her plan was a mistaken one. At this point, more and more alarmed and incapacitated, she flew out of the cottage screaming, as I have told, and crying for assistance. However after the first excitement had subsided, Bessie having disappeared, and Ann being present, the tale of Ann's exploit got abroad—the water all about seeming to bear witness that Ann's presence of mind had saved the child's life. Ann knew that she left the child in flames, but was not unwilling to believe that her device had been of some use; and as she did not know how the flames were at length put out, she did not stop all the questions and remarks to explain exactly how the thing happened, and what had been her own part.

School time now came. Bessie was there. Ann and many others were absent, in the midst of all the bustle in and about Sally O'Neile's cottage. Ann was a very great person. Every body was praising her. Every body was saying she had saved a child's life, and how grateful poor Mrs. O'Neile would be to her to her dying day. Ann, without much effort, was persuaded she had done some great thing. She

was confused and pleased, and did not seem to have time to consider what she had actually done or not done, much less to explain this to others. But Ann was of a disposition to feel very differently, had things been the other way. If she had really saved the child's life, as Bessie had done, or had she only helped to do so, and had heard the deed given to another, or not given to herself, she would have found time to remember, and opportunity to explain, that they were all making a great mistake, for it was she who had done this and that and acted so and so. This was because she felt it so very pleasant to be praised and made much of. She liked that better than relating or hearing things exactly as they were; that is, she loved her own praise better than the truth, or, as we have it in a text, she loved the praise of man better than the praise of God.

Next day school time came again. Bessie was not there. Ann was, and much again was made of her. Every one wondered why Bessie was not at school. It was found that she had gone out somewhere with her mother. Next morning Bessie was absent again. Mrs. Baker came in to give some orders about needlework. It *was just as the school was assembling in the afternoon.* Mrs. Baker sat talking with Esther

and she said she would wait till the children all came in.

Mrs. Baker had been seeing the poor burnt child, who was going on satisfactorily, and had heard the praises of Ann's conduct which were afloat in that part of the village. She tried to get a connected account of the accident from Mrs. O'Neile. Emma was the only one who knew about it, but she was so frightened and bewildered at the time, that nobody attended much to what she said, and many laughed at her assertion that Bessie Gray came and put out the fire, as a fancy of her own. One woman, however, said, she did think that Bessie was there when they first came into the cottage; but it seemed impossible; else, why did she run away directly?

Mrs. Baker asked if the fire was put out with the water.

"Oh, no, ma'am," said Sally O'Neile, "they choose to say so, but it was no such thing. Sure enough, the water in the kettle was boiling hot by that time, and the poor babe would have been scalded to death. An hour afterwards the water in the kettle was hot enough. Besides, ma'am, I believe my Emma that it was Bessie came and put out the fire. That child, ma'am, is all but a little angel to my mind. She was the comfort of poor little Miriam, my sister says, who lives

next door, and more was the pity they did not let her go on with her to the last."

After this, Mrs. Baker made farther enquiries, and satisfied herself how it had all happened.

When the children were all seated, she spoke of this unfortunate accident, and said she had been hearing all about it. Ann's heart beat hopefully, for she wished Mrs. Baker to hear what was said of herself and her conduct, and she thought most likely Mrs. Baker had heard.

"Ann," said Mrs. Baker, looking at her, while Ann looked down modestly; "Ann, I do not know if you know it, but I believe people give you more credit in this matter than you deserve."

"Why, ma'am, they say for certain that Ann saved the child's life," said Esther; "there was nobody by to help but Ann."

"But how was it Ann that you left the child in flames? You did not put out those flames; yet they were out when you came back. Were they not?"

Ann told no falsehood, and simply replied, "Yes, ma'am."

"Then you did not put out the fire?" asked Mrs. Baker again.

"No, ma'am," said Ann.

"And so you see you did not save the child's life. People think and say you did, Ann; so

you must set them right upon this, and tell them you did not."

Ann looked very foolish.

"You ought to have done this, Ann, without being told to do so by me, or any body else. But we must try to find out who it was *did* put out the fire. Who can tell? It could not be little Emma. Who was it?"

Ann was silent a moment. She was vexed to lose the praise that had been her's for nearly two days. Should she tell her thoughts? By giving up Bessie's name, she knew she lost all chance of keeping her present fame. But then, by telling, she should please Mrs. Baker and be very good. Besides, Bessie was sure to tell all about it when she came to school again; so she decided to tell, and replied, "Please, ma'am, I don't know, but I think it was Bessie Gray."

"Then I am less than ever pleased with you, Ann," said Mrs. Baker, to poor Ann's great surprise. "If you had the least suspicion that another had done it, it was more and more mean of you to do as you have done."

"Please, ma'am, Bessie has not been at school these two days," said Ann, in a tone as though this accounted for all, though she herself hardly knew how she meant it to be an excuse.

"Yes, I know it," replied Mrs. Baker, "though

I suppose you do not know the reason. The reason is, that her hands were so scorched in putting out the flames, that the doctor to whom her mother took her yesterday, advised her to keep at home a few days."

This showed that Mrs. Baker was in possession of the whole story. Bessie and her mother had told her all, and the state of Bessie's hands proved how arduous her task had been, and how unflinchingly she had performed it. Mrs. Baker was surprised at a little girl like Bessie, and one too so quiet, and apparently slow, showing so much thought and energy, and she had questioned her about it.

"How was it, Bessie," said she, "that you were not frightened, like Ann?"

"Please, ma'am," replied Bessie, "because I did not think of being frightened then."

"What did you think of, Bessie?" asked Mrs. Baker.

"Please, ma'am, I thought of getting to see what was the matter as fast as I could."

"And how came you to think of your cloak?" again asked Mrs. Baker.

"Please, ma'am, from the story you told us one day about playing with fire," said Bessie.

"Mrs. Hammond put out the flames with her cloak, and I remembered it directly. I thought

Ann had cried 'Fire,' and I was very glad of my large cloak."

Here Bessie's eyes, which she was once so fond of shutting up, gave a certain look, while she herself made a movement, which Mrs. Baker understood in a moment to mean, that the little girl remembered Mrs. Baker's kindness about the cloak, and that she wished to express her thanks.

"Bessie has often said, ma'am," added her mother, "how glad she was of her large cloak, and of the hot day and the packet she had with her. The heavy parcel and the heat obliged her to take off her cloak and hang it on her arm, so that all was ready, and she is so grateful to you for helping her to buy a large thick cloak, instead of the small ones girls generally have."

"It is indeed wonderful," replied the lady, "to see how happily slight circumstances sometimes unite together to help us in cases of danger. Without these little particulars which you mention, we can see no human means of the poor little boy's life having been saved. At any rate, he would have suffered most dreadfully, and perhaps for life."

"Very true, as you say, ma'am," observed Mrs. Gray, "and these things come to make us remember that there is One above who is always

watching over us ; and I do think, ma'am, that Bessie, young as she is, lays this to heart as much as those older and sharper than she is. She is gone now, ma'am, so I may praise her, for her father and I both feel a parent's joy in her just now. She does not pride herself in what she has done, but seems to have a quiet thankfulness that such a thing happened to her rather than another ; and that, ma'am, I take it, is much better than the boasting Ann Roberts made, when after all she had nothing to boast about."

"Bessie has behaved well," said Mrs. Baker, "and there is no harm in her being told so ; but it does not make Bessie's conduct really better, to think that another's is not so good, and I am sure it is not a thought that would make Bessie happier."

"No, indeed, ma'am, that it would not," said Mrs. Gray, warmly, "Bessie is like a baby in all such thoughts ; and though Ann Roberts has been jealous and spiteful ever since the day Bessie equalled her, Bessie takes no heed whatever of it."

Mrs. Baker was surprised to hear this of Ann, *and said she thought it was a mistake of Mrs. Gray's.* This conversation, however, directed Mrs. Baker's observation more particularly to

the two girls, and indeed to the school in general. She perceived that she had made mistakes, partly from her own inexperience, partly from judging from what she was told, and she resolved to observe Bessie more carefully for herself. She considered Bessie's behaviour from the first, and she found the little girl had always acted well, and shown good and right dispositions. And if we recall all we know of Bessie, we shall find the same. She has all along taken advantage of every opportunity for improvement. She had not the helps others had, in early education, in parents who could teach her, in natural quickness, or in being a favourite with her teachers. With Bessie all was quite opposite to this. All she did was for herself, by dint of labour and perseverance. Many a time did she sit at home over her lesson, instead of amusing herself like others, and many a time was she misunderstood by her schoolmistress, and laughed at by her companions, when all the time she knew that she was not as dull as they thought her.

Mr. Baker was just beginning to attend to her and understand her, when he married, and the school came into the hands of Mrs. Baker, who was a stranger, and had to learn Bessie over again. Mrs. Baker was always kind to her, and

liked her in the Sunday school, still that lady judged for a time by what she heard, and from the general low estimation in which the little girl was held, did not thoroughly take her up and help her through her difficulties. Mrs. Baker herself had occasionally shown displeasure at Bessie's slowness ; especially at the habit of shutting her eyes. As soon as Bessie became fully aware of this, she resolved to cure herself of the trick. She at length succeeded, but it cost her a harder effort than any thing she had before done. However her pains were not thrown away. She had exerted herself to obey those it was her duty to obey, and whether they perceived this or not, she had gained a victory over herself, which would prepare her perhaps some day for greater usefulness. Bessie was every day not only improving in memory, but in character. She was losing childish or silly ways and feelings, and gaining wiser and better ones. She was putting away the bad and the weak part of her nature and character, and strengthening that which was better. And this is what education is intended to do. Reading and writing are useful and proper to learn now-a-days, because they are common and necessary, and because *most parents wish their children to learn ; but reading and writing do not make people good*

and religious really. Even now we sometimes see people who cannot read, the best and the cleverest in the village, as was the case with Bessie's own father; but he was most anxious that his daughter should have an advantage that he had not; and his feeling was quite right, for now that reading is so general, it seems the best, if not the only means of learning properly our duty to God and to man.

Bessie's character showed itself just the same in her conduct as in her lessons. From the sketch here given, it can be seen that daily events became an education to her, as well as her actual learning. How much and how seriously she thought of Miriam's illness and death. How she dwelt on her friend's piety and goodness, and with an eye of faith followed her beyond this outward world. And she did not do this merely from feeling or affection, which might pass away, but Miriam's altered mind and gentle ways dwelt on her heart, and led her to cultivate and imitate a temper and frame which seemed so near heaven, and which she thought must be pleasing to Him of whom she often remembered her hymn said,

“ His soul was gentle as a lamb.”

Perhaps dwelling upon such examples and

thoughts as these helped her to behave in the way her mother mentioned in the conversation with Mrs. Baker. Bessie however was not one of those mild characters, which seem lovely at some times, but have no power or strength in them. Mistakes are often made in this respect, and they were so made in the case of Bessie and Ann. Very few indeed in the village ever dreamed of Bessie having more energy and courage than Ann. Most would have laughed the idea to scorn. Yet what can we say to the scene of the child on fire? Who showed the most courage and presence of mind there? Who showed right or wrong dispositions afterwards? The fact was, Ann was a quick ready girl, to whom it was no trouble at all to learn to a certain point, and who could make it appear that, even after that point, she was cleverer than she really was. Yet after all, qualities must be real, to make any real show in the end, however much vain girls, like Ann, hope to make the appearance of them do instead of the reality. In the instance of the fire, partly occasioned by her own heedlessness, Ann was tried, and failed. This was rather a falling off for a vain boasting temper such as hers; but *far worse* was her being ashamed to speak the *truth*, and *by silence* accepting a degree of praise *which she knew* did not belong to her, and

which she more than suspected belonged to another. In the course of time such characters are tried, and fail, even in the eyes of men; this is sad, and must be a degradation. Often we cannot help being sorry, and pitying them; but, alas! why will they not lay to heart the truth, that the appearance of goodness is not goodness? Why will they not cast away the veil of vanity and self-satisfaction with which they blind themselves, or rather try to do so? Ann had said over and over again, as perfectly and readily as possible, the hymn beginning,

“Almighty God, Thy piercing eye,
Strikes through the shades of night,
And our most secret actions lie
All open to Thy sight;”

With the last verse,

“O may I now for ever fear
To indulge a sinful thought,
Since the great God can see and hear,
And writes down every fault.”

She had said this, and many others of the same kind, but she did not lay the words seriously to heart as Bessie always did, and so she failed to perceive how wrong her apparently small acts and feelings often were. Bessie was serious and

thoughtful, and had such a temper as has been pronounced by our Lord as being like the ground prepared for the reception of the good seed. Whatever then were her circumstances, we are sure she would be assisted by the Holy Spirit, which is promised to all who believe, in her warfare against sin, the world, and the devil, as we read in our prayer-books ; and thus we are also sure she would grow to be a good and a true follower of Christ, who was her pattern and her guide.

FINIS.









